

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EC TELECOMMUNICATIONS STUDY

REF: STATE 248180

PASS COMMERCE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE EC COMM RESPONSIBLE FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS HAS TOLD US THAT THE COMMISSION IS JUST BEGINNING TO STUDY THE POSSIBILITIES FOR AN EC TELECOMMUNICATION POLICY. THE COMMISSION HAS CO TRACTED WITH THE*MITRE CORPORATION TO DO AN INITIAL SUTDY WHICH WOULD IDENTIFY BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES OF A COMMUNITY APPROACH. FURMULATION OF A POLICY IS SOME TIME OFF. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 10 THE MISSION SPOKE WITH LEON SMULIAN, THE NEW

DIVISION CHIEF RESPONSIBLE FOR TELECOMMUNICATION IN THE EC COMMISSION DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INDUSTRIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL AFFAIRS. ON THE BASIS OF OUR CONVERSATION, WE BELIEVE THAT -- CONTRARY TO THE INFORMATION GIVEN TO THE DEPARTMENT IN REFTEL -- THE EC COMMISSION IS NOT PLANNING TO RELEASE SHORTLY A STUDY ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY.

3. ACCORDING TO SMULIAN, THE COMMISSION IS ONLY BEGINNING TO STUDY
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TELECOMMUNICATIONS IN EUROPE. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EC

TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY, EVEN IF IT SHOULD TAKE PLACE, IS SOME WAY OFF. SMULIAN MENTIONED TWO INITIAL SEPTS THAT THE COMMISSION IS TAKING. THE FIRST IS A CONTRACT WITH THE MITRE CORPORATION OF THE U.S. TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY WHICH WOULD IDENTIFY THE BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES OF A COMM*NITY APPROACH TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS. SMULIAN SAID THIS AMOUNTS TO ANSWERING THE QUESTION -- WHAT WOULD BE THE BENEFITS OF A UNIFIED COMMUNITY-WIDE TELEPHONE SYSTEM SUCH AS THE BELL SYSTEM IN THE U.S.? THE MITRE STUDY WILL PROBABLY BE FINISHED IN THREE MONTHS.

4. THE SECOND STEP WILL BE A MEETING IN MARCH ATTENDED BY THE DIRECTORS OF THE TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS IN THE MEMBER STATES. A PAPER HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR THIS MEETING WHICH RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT POSSIBILITIES FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS. THIS PAPER IS INTENDED TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION AND DOES NOT CONTAIN COMMISSION POLICY DECISIONS. IT COULD BE THAT THIS DOCUMENT IS WHAT THE U.S. ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION WAS REFERRING TO IN REFTTEL.

5. THE COMMISSION, ACCORDING TO SMULIAN, AT THIS POINT HAS NO FIXED PLANS FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY. AN OBVIOUS POSSIBLE COMMISSION OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO OPEN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN THE TELECOMMUNICATI*NS FIELD. (SMULIAN IS AWARE OF THE POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES IN HAVING NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS TURN AWAY FROM NATIONAL PRODUCERS AND OF THE TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL PROBLEMS INVOLVED BECAUSE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS APPLY DIFFERENT EQUIPMENT STANDARDS.) OTHER POSSIBLE OBJECTIVES COULD BE (A) COLLABORATION BETWEEN MEMBER STATE TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ON R & D, (B) COMMUNITY STANDARDS FOR NEW TECHNOLOGY, (C) A SINGLE COMMUNITY TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, ETC. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THESE WERE ALL VERY OPEN QUESTIONS.

6. SMULIAN SAID THAT AS HE NOW SEES IT, THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION WILL BE THAT OF A CATALYST. IT WILL TRY TO BRING NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION OFFICIALS TOGETHER AND ENCOURAGE THEIR COLLABORATION. THROUGH ITS STUDIES, IT WILL SUGGEST THOSE AREAS WHERE COLLABORATION WOULD BE MOST FRUITFULL.

7. COMMENT- SMULIAN, WHO IS BRITISH, HAS GIVEN UP A HIGH LEVEL POSITION AS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF PLESSEY MICRO-SYSTEMS TO TAKE WHAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE BELIEVES TO BE A MUCH LESS IMPORTANT JOB AT THE EC COMMISSION. HE EXPLAINED THAT RONALD GRIERSON, THE OUTGOING DIRECTOR GENERAL, AND CHRISTOPHER LAYTON, THE DIRECTOR FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, PERSUADED HIM TO COME TO BRUSSELS TO TRY TO GET A EUROPEAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY STARTED.
GREENWALD

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